



## **ECO ENCOUNTERS** **OUTDOOR EDUCATION**

# **GARDEN SAFARI**

### **Lesson Plan**

**Age Group:** Recommended 6-10yo

**Time Recommendation:** 1-2 hours

**Themes:** Exploration/ Living Things/ Plants & Animals/  
Invertebrates

#### **Correlation to Ireland/UK Curriculums:**

##### **UK:**

Science (Year 1): seasonal changes in the local environment/ common names of plants & flowers/ plant structures/ animal habitats

Design & Technology (key stages 1 & 2): using tools and natural materials in a range of relevant contexts

##### **Ireland:**

6-SESE – NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS – the local natural environment

5-SPHE – MYSELF – self-awareness, decision-making

4-THE ARTS – CONSTRUCTION – making constructions, looking & responding

3-PE- OUTDOOR & ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES – walking, understanding & appreciating games

**Objectives: Students will:**

- Explore a garden or local green area nearby
- Become familiar with some local animals & plants
- Create some art to record the living things they've found
- Learn what an organism needs to survive and create a 'mini habitat'

**Key Words Include:**

Animal, plant, roots, leaf, stem, flower, habitat, invertebrate

**NOTE:** This lesson plan is designed for mixed age/ability groups, in particular families home-educating during lockdown. As such activities can be carried out in different ways with people of different age groups depending on ability.

**Preparation:** Let the group know that they will be having an outdoor mini adventure! Make sure everyone is dressed for the occasion. Being outside is always fun as long as everyone is dressed to be warm and dry in cool weather or with a hat and some water handy when it's hot! And be prepared to get a bit muddy too.

**Location:** These activities are best carried out in a garden, or a nearby green area during a walk. Even the smallest green area will prove to be a home to animals and plants of some kind with a bit of exploration, patience, and excitement.

**Introduction:** Get started by watching the Eco Encounters introduction video for this lesson here:

<https://ecoencounters.wixsite.com/ecoe/post/lesson-plan-garden-safari>

This will give them an idea of what kind of things to look out for and where they might be found.



**Equipment:** this can be done with very little, however it is helpful if you can find:

- a small pot or container to help capture and collect small animals
- a metal spoon for digging
- any suitable wildlife book or guide, or you can use some websites (links below)

**Experience:** after watching the video, you should have some ideas about where to look for animals and plants in your garden, green area, or street while out on a walk. Great places to look include:

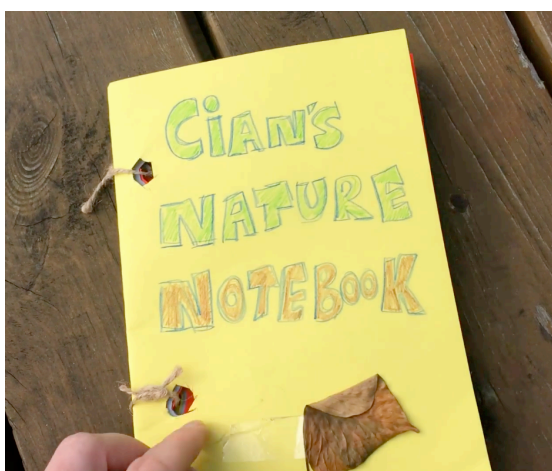
- long grass and under stones and logs
- inside hollow sticks or bricks
- among the lower branches and leaves of trees
- watch out for pollinating insects on flowers
- watch out for birds on trees

**Reflecting on (Thinking about) the Experience:** Ask the students what kinds of animals and plants they found.

-Where were they living? And what do they need to survive? Make a list with the grown-up helping if necessary.

-Create a simple **nature diary** to stick things that you've found into!

**REMEMBER:** we should only collect things that are already on the ground, not pick things from living plants!





**Application:** It's time to get creative! Ask the students to make some drawings of the different types of things they found. Put all the plants together on one page, all the insects on another page, etc. It isn't about getting everything exactly right – it's about observing nature and coming to your own conclusions about what belongs where.

Some categories you could use:

**Plants:** usually **green**, have **roots**, stem/trunk, and **leaves**

**Insects:** small, **animals**, **six legs**, **three body parts** and **hard bodies**

**Birds:** have **beaks**, **feathers**, **scaly legs**, **sing songs**

**Conclusion:** Students should notice that many different kinds of living things exist in the same areas and affect each other. Any place an animal lives is called a **habitat**! It must provide an animal with **space**, **food**, **water** and **shelter**. Can you make a mini-habitat for a creature of your choice? It could be imaginary or it could be a toy or doll you have around the house. Use natural materials you find around the garden to create a habitat that will be perfect for your creature.

**Extensions/Resources:** the nature journal can be something you add to everyday. This is a great way to make notes about how nature changes over the course of the year. You can draw what you see to record things that can't or shouldn't be collected.

## **Links:**

**Great site for identifying wildflowers in Ireland, organized by colour:**

<https://www.irishwildflowers.ie/>

**Wildflowers in the UK, from the Woodland Trust:**

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/plants/wild-flowers/>

**Irish Garden Birds:**

<https://www.irishgardenbirds.ie/irelands-top-20-birds/#>

**UK Garden Birds from the Wildlife Trusts:**

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife/how-identify/identify-garden-birds>

**A great garden Minibeast Hunt from the Woodland Trust:**

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/48349/minibeast-hunt.pdf>